

The Random Jottings of Donald Jay from Nelson in Pendle.

## Ightenhill Castle Burnley

In the peaceful countryside of Ightenhill, nestled amidst sprawling fields and verdant landscapes, stood the remnants of a forgotten past—the once majestic Ightenhill Castle. Although time had eroded its grandeur, the castle's rich history lingered in the whispers of the wind.

Centuries ago, the lords of the manor, the de Lacies, made their temporary dwelling within the fortified walls of the castle. The imposing structure overlooked the vast Pendle Forest, where noble game roamed under the watchful eye of diligent foresters. The tranquil Calder's stream meandered through the valley below, its waters merging with the tributary of Pendle water.

Ightenhill Castle held a commanding position, perched upon the highest elevation in the park. Its residents were treated to a breathtaking panorama that stretched as far as the eye could see. To the west, Pendle Forest sprawled, offering a sanctuary for the hunt. The lords of the land reveled in the sport, surrounded by their retinue of foresters, reeves, agisters, and verdurers. The view from Ightenhill Manor House was an exquisite tapestry of rolling hills and meandering rivers—a sight that truly captured the essence of natural beauty.

Once a royal manor, Ightenhill Castle had likely hosted royalty itself. Its existence could be traced back to the year 1238, a testament to its long-standing significance. This factitious manor, formed by the consolidation of several smaller manors, held court twice a year to administer justice and uphold the rule of law. Burnley, Filley Close, new Laund Booth, Reedley Hallows, and Briercliffe-with-Extwistle were among the amalgamated manors that comprised Ightenhill.

In the annals of history, it was recorded that Ightenhill housed a royal horse breeding establishment. In 1251, Edmund de Lacy obtained a charter of free warren, securing his park at Ightenhill. The castle, even then, was considered ancient and dilapidated. A survey conducted in 1522, during the tenure of Sir John Towneley as the lessee, revealed its ruinous state, with crumbling walls and decayed chambers. The castle never underwent restoration, and when the Shuttleworths of Gawthorpe assumed ownership of the park after the Towneleys, Ightenhill Castle had vanished entirely, leaving only traces of its former glory.

James McKay, in his extensive work on "Pendle Hill in History and Literature," shed light on the castle's vibrant past. He painted a vivid picture of the days when Ightenhill would come alive with pageantry, minstrelsy, and outdoor spectacles as the de Lacies traversed between their castles in Clitheroe and Pontefract. The castle served as a place of judgment, where offenses committed within the neighboring Forest of Pendle were tried. Even during times when the lords of the Honor of Clitheroe were absent, the castle remained under the vigilant care of the Parker of Ightenhill—the esteemed title held by the park-keeper. Through generations, this designation became a surname, forever linking the Parker family to the castle's legacy and becoming the origin of other notable lineages, including the Parkers of Royle.

As time continued its relentless march forward, Ightenhill Castle faded into the realm of folklore and whispers. Its stories echoed in the minds of those who walked through the fields and gazed upon the solitary farmhouse that now stood upon its once hallowed ground. But the essence of the castle, its resplendent heritage, and the echoes of the

past would forever be a part of the collective memory

By Donald Jay